

WOMAN'S HOME PAGE

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RESPONSIBILITIES of MOTHERHOOD

The Care and Education of Children, the Highest Object in a Woman's Life, Requires Constant Sacrifice but Insures Final Happiness

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The Greatest Operative
Contralto of the Day

THERE is, to my mind, no subject so vital about which one may write as that on which I have been asked to express my opinion. Children! What would the world be without them? By them the perpetuity of the race is assured and on their upbringing the progress of the world depends. Although the superlative importance of bringing up children properly has been realized for ages, there are no rules to guide the young parent; the only principles to be followed are individual ones, and the mistakes of one generation are often passed on to the next through an unreasoning prejudice possessed by some people against anything that is not "old-fashioned."

Every Child an Individual

Of course every child born into the world has its own individuality; its own twists of character. These have to be dealt with as occasion demands, and they should be the subject of deep study on the part of the parent. But it is not strange that, while there have always been numerous instances of this sort of thing, the average parent is inclined to regard a special mental twist as nothing more, nor less than a childish whim, bothersome and annoying to the parent but not worthy of serious attention? In fact, do not the majority of parents nowadays absolutely fail to realize the great responsibility that is theirs, and are they not therefore to be held accountable for many actions of their offspring in after life?

I have perhaps passed rather suddenly to the point of what I have to say, but it is a point that has always been uppermost in my mind when thinking of children. One who will seriously consider the possibilities of the proper training of children and the decrease in crime and badness such training would mean, will agree with me that there is no other so worthy of earnest attention. The next generation will be exactly the children of to-day are. Should we strive with all our might to make a better generation than this one; or do we not seek all the aid and assistance that we can obtain on this most important subject?

Possible. The statement that there are no rules to guide parents needs explanation. There can never be a set of rules by which children may be brought up, because there will always be individuality to reckon with, both in the parent and in the child. Of recent years there has been a tendency to advancement that has much that is good and much that is bad in it.

It is absurd to think that every child should walk at a certain age; that a failure to talk at the age of eighteen months is a sign of lacking mentality. Nevertheless there are many mothers who, noticing that their sons do not progress as rapidly as their neighbors', endeavor to force progress. The result is none the less disastrous because not realized by those who are responsible.

Aside from such matters as these, there are many things that may be said to regulate. I have a larger family than the majority of women in America, and I have always found that, in a great many things, the same treatment brings about the same results, no matter how different the children may be individually. Before my first child entered the world I realized that I was accepting a great responsibility, and for that reason no sacrifice has seemed too great for me.

The Ordeal of Motherhood

I was, at least to an extent, prepared for the ordeal through which I was to

pass. It is a long, long ordeal, lasting from before birth until the years of discretion have been reached by the child, and there are no periods of immunity. Unceasing watchfulness is the key-note of good motherhood. Selfishness, we are told frequently, is the dominating influence of our time. Motherhood admits of nothing of the kind. Always the child should be the first consideration, both on the part of the mother and of the father. There will be discouragements without number, obstacles innumerable. Always there will be opposing influences to overcome; but no battle can be won save through fighting, and those who would reap victory in having brought into the world a man or a woman of whom they may be justly proud, must struggle unceasingly. The peace of old age will be all the sweeter.

Mother-love the Greatest Force

During all my fight against adversity, which lasted until my coming to America in 1892—only eleven years ago—I had to provide for a large family of children. My point of view, therefore, is not that of the care-free woman whose material wants are amply provided for. Many times has the task of feeding, clothing and educating my boys and girls seemed beyond my power, and frequently was a continuation of the struggle despaired of.

I knew that I owed to my children the very best that I could give them in every way; I dreaded to contemplate that they should have to go into the great world handicapped in any manner. While, perhaps, I did not realize it at the time, I know now that it was the mother-love in me that spurred me on to work and plan, to strive onward and upward through all those years.

Mother-love is, to my mind, born with the child. Unfortunately there are cases in which it dies from lack of nourishment, or is superseded by simple affection through being choked by the weeds of selfishness, distrust and ill-temper. So many mothers who have loved their babies come only to "care for" their boys and girls.

And so many parents who have exercised all the unselfishness their natures were capable of in behalf of their boys and girls, have grown careless in their attention to the welfare of the youths and maidens of their families. Contrary to general opinion though it may be, I hold that there is no "dangerous age" of children. From the time a baby is born until the young man or woman gains a full knowledge of the world and the ability to think for himself or herself, and to think rightly, all ages are dangerous.

My Own Experiences

But to return to my own story: Before I came to America all my children had been under my constant personal care. I believed my duty lay that way, and I have never had reason to change my opinion. Naturally my burden was a considerable one, for I was a busy woman and my family was large. Still I did think then, and I do think now, that the natural duties of a mother can not be delegated to another without disastrous results.

It was this belief that caused me to nurse my own children always, even when playing an operatic engagement. Many times my baby has been in my dressing-room waiting for me while I have been responding to an encore.

When I first set foot on American soil I decided to establish a home here ultimately and educate my children on this side of the Atlantic. American life, institutions and characteristics interested me greatly, and I became con-

vinced that this country had before it the greatest future. I should have taken this step had I been childless. How much greater the reason when I could offer its boundless possibilities to my boys!

Mother the Child's Best Friend

In bringing up my children I have always endeavored to inculcate into their minds at an early age the feeling that they could depend upon me for everything and consider me, in every way, their best and truest friend. I kept them with me virtually all the time. As I have said, I alone took care of the eight of them unaided, was with them in health and in sickness, in joy and in sorrow. I never permitted my profession to interfere with my

If I am a good mother, as people choose to call me, it is because I maintain that women of the stage should be married; that marriage rounds out their art; that it is the goal for which every woman should strive, and that motherhood is the crowning glory of womanhood. The satisfaction of a work well done is a more than sufficient reward.

Children an Incentive

During my upward struggle the faces of my children were the great incentive

wise, no matter what her calling, no matter what her station in life. The molding of a character is the prime object of existence, and there is nothing that shapes the character so thoroughly and along such good lines as a worthy motherhood.

that their own welfare as well as their own comfort depended upon obeying me and behaving properly.

Once a child is brought to realize this, it will fall into proper ways. I punished my children severely, but for wrong-doing. I deprived them of some pleasure. This subjected them to no indignity, as thrashings sometimes do with sensitive children, and the lesson is better learned, I find.

I required the truth at all times and in all circumstances, and I did not punish a child that admitted its transgressions. Children, I have found, are very sensible, and even at an early age are open to conviction; if one will only take the time and pains to explain. But alas, so many mothers are too busy!

Irational Punishments

Grave, grave, mistakes are made by parents in modes of punishment for "typical misdoings." A harsh word, roughly spoken; a hand laid none too gently on a little shoulder, a push or a slap; all are calculated to impress a child with its own insignificance, to create in the little brain the thought that there is an inequality between child and parent that may never be overcome. When a child thinks thus—and who can say what deep thoughts enter a little one's mind at times?—it commences to draw within itself, to live its own life apart from its parents.

With this comes self-pity, and, afterward, each reprimand, no matter how thoroughly deserved, is regarded as but another engagement in the perpetual, impossible fight between forces hopelessly and unevenly matched. Thus, little by little, the boy or the girl "grows away" from those who should be his or her chief companions and confidants.

The Child's Brain

Little beginnings! Imaginary as it may seem, it is not impossible that some great crimes have had their origin in unjust chastisement meted out to a well-meaning child. Small things affect us older folk; how much more must they affect a growing, sensitive brain, open to new thoughts and new ideas every instant of its existence, and putting on each act observed a construction naturally narrow, and based, in many cases, purely on sentiment and seldom on reason? For children, all are sentimental, and their reasoning, if reason they do, has for its objective point an ideal.

These little brains of our children, which treasure a kind word so long and retain as carefully the memory of a wrong—some day they will have to think out questions large with import and on which the welfare of not one person alone, but of many hundreds, may depend.

How great then is the responsibility that rests with mothers and fathers who are charged with the training of these brains! How necessary they should try to see two points of view at the same time and always, so that no vagrant train of thought may be started in the little head.

I seldom had to resort to corporal punishment, I am very glad to say, though I admit that there are occasions when it is necessary. My children were close to me, and I think they understood me from the time they could understand anything at all. If they misbehaved and they saw that I was hurt or sorry, they were sorry too, and there was a quite sufficient punishment, for none of them would transgress again in the same way, as long as the memory of my sorrow at their act lasted. They all learned to know what was passing through my mind when I

looked at them, and with my eyes I punished them. It took patience very often I will admit, but I think it is the better way.

Bedtime and Breakfast

There were always set rules for my children as to bedtime and time for getting up. For the young lads seven and half-past seven was fixed as the proper time for retiring. Each took a warm bath, brushed his hair and teeth and went to bed. Between five and half-past they arose and took a cold sponge bath. Breakfast, consisting of rolls and milk, was served at six.

At seven they were in school, and at one they came home for the substantial meal of the day. They returned to school and came back at four, when they ate a little lunch consisting of bread and crackers and a little milk. The rest of the afternoon was spent in play out of doors and in study.

As they grew older I required the boys to dress and undress themselves and to keep their clothing neat and clean. They were obliged, too, to keep their bedrooms in order, to make their own beds and to take proper care of their toys.

I persuaded them to take great pride in the keeping of their rooms, and often I have seen the face of one of my boys redden with pleasure when his room, clean, neat and tidy, was displayed to some visiting friend of my own.

Early to Bed

I think many American mothers will exclaim over the hours my children were obliged to keep. It is not the custom of American lads to rise at five o'clock. I know, but in Germany, where the schools open at seven in the morning, it is different and the system has seemed to me to be a good one. There is no time like the early morning.

If children retire sufficiently early they have had plenty of sleep, and often I have seen the face of one of my boys redden with pleasure when his room, clean, neat and tidy, was displayed to some visiting friend of my own.

But the mothers! someone exclaims. Well, I am a mother, and a great many times I have gone to the theater after the children were in bed and sung an opera, to be up the next morning with my boys and girls. Did I get enough sleep? Perhaps not quite enough, but then I may sleep late now and know that my children are happy and well-behaved; healthy and safely out of mischief.

Had I slept late in the days gone by, I might be spending sleepless nights now; who knows? Many a business man, especially in this country, does not get sufficient sleep. His business demands too much of his time. He feels the same joy in his success, for a successful conclusion of some great business transaction that I feel in having brought up my children properly according to my lights.

Woman's Business

All business demands the sacrifice of self and pleasure, to be brought to a successful conclusion, and old-fashioned as the idea may seem, I still believe that motherhood is the business of woman-kind, and there is no more honorable, no more glorifying, and no more satisfying pursuit. When the time shall come as it must come to us all, for a last look about the room into the faces of our loved ones; when there shall be one last kiss and one last pressure of the hand, and then darkness, no woman in the world may say more than that she has been a good daughter, a good wife and a good mother.

CARE IN SPEECH THE HALL MARK OF BREEDING

Use of the Voice, Choice of Words, Elegance of Expression should be Constantly Cultivated

THE noted modern writer, Henry James, in commenting on the cult of voice-culture in speaking, remarks that the question of its in the least matter how people may speak is absent from American education, either of the home or of the school. Taking thought and taking trouble are necessary if one would cultivate careful speech. "Things are worth while when you stand or fall by them, and it is not too much to say that men and women alike in Europe stand or fall by their degree of mastery of the habit of employing their vocal organs after the fashion of good society."

Cultivating the Voice

No one can afford to neglect the cultivation of a well-modulated voice, careful speech, clear enunciation and correct pronunciation. The voice, language and accent are the best criteria of education and social standing.

A firm, sweet, low voice, with evenness of tone and smooth, rich utterance, is very pleasing to the ear. A high, nasal, rasping voice is disconcerting. The honest desire and the resolve to improve one's speech will be the quickest way to accomplish it. Patience and persistence are needed.

Speaking Tones

The full, free chest-tones should be cultivated in speaking and the throat and head-voices avoided. The voice in speaking may be trained to be as flexible and melodious as the voice in singing. Reading aloud is good practice, remembering to open the mouth and utter sounds clearly. Words are not to be strung over, syllables are to be enunciated carefully; vowels should have their broad, full tones and consonants should not be dropped.

Slovenly habits in speaking are in closing the mouth and speaking between the teeth. These bad habits, including the hard, nasal tones, may be cured by the simple and persistent practice, many times a day, of opening the mouth wide and uttering the syllable *ah* from the chest. No one can speak well who has not the power to utter this sound freely from the chest. Musical critics mean this when they mention the "pure and free delivery of the voice."

The Broad "a"

The standard of pronunciation is and must be the usage of those who are of the highest social culture, and must be necessarily standard English. Faults in pronunciation may be corrected by ob-

servation and careful practice. The broad *a* sound, *ah*, is not an affectation, but is the accepted custom among the best speakers. The words *after*, *past*, *half*, *calm*, *aunt* and *laugh* may be mentioned as among those with the *ah* sound.

It is correct to pronounce Tuesday, stupid, new, and duty with the *u* sound, not *Toosday*, *stupid*, *noo* or *dooty*. Errors in grammar should be very carefully watched and corrected. A great mistake is to say, "He says," for "He said," or, "It is me," instead of "It is I," or, "Mary and I are going," or, "There's plenty of things to do," instead of "There are plenty of things to do."

Errors in Form

Exaggerated terms are too frequently used and are not in good taste, such as *awfully*, *nice*, *awfully*, *pretty*, *beastly*, *weather*, *perfectly*, *splendid*, etc.

Recently when reading a new and very popular novel, I noticed a succession of errors in good form in the talk between two of the leading characters. In nearly every sentence the name was introduced of the person addressed. Whether the talk was light or casual, serious or emotional, there was a running accompaniment of, "Mr. So-and-So," or, "Miss So-and-So." In the first chapter the name of the man to whom she was speaking came fourteen times from the lips of the heroine. In another chapter the name was repeated twenty times. This error on the part of the author was astonishing and ludicrous in its continual repetition.

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEAUTIFUL HANDS

Ways whereby Their Appearance may be Rendered Attractive



I HAVE been interested in looking at people's hands during the past year, and I have been surprised at the number who have shapely hands, by far a larger number than one would expect. The size of the hands, for the most part, depends upon the size of the bones, which form the framework; the condition of the hands, upon the muscles and the skin. Children often cause their hands to become misshapen by pulling the fingers and "cracking the joints," as they call it. This anatomical experiment enlarges the joints irreparably, and mothers should prevent the children from doing it. Exercise and work, which put a strain upon the muscles of the hands, develop and enlarge them; but large hands well cared for are not to be lamented.

Keep the Hands Gloved

It is not vanity alone that is gratified by small and well-kept hands; the hands can do better and more delicate work if they are kept in good condition. When

one is called upon to do rough labor, gloves should be worn. The rubber gloves are useful for those who have to have their hands in water, and do much to save the hands from the roughening of the skin, but because of the comfort, for housework done without due attention to the hands will, especially in cold weather, cause them to chafe and crack and bleed. Much dishwashing can be done with the little mops that come, or with the dishcloth on the end of a fork, so that the hands need not be wet. One could write a chapter on the proper way of washing dishes in relation to preserving the health of the hands.

The Uses of Rubber Gloves

When the hands must be in water pull on the rubber gloves. In sweeping and dusting, and in working in the garden, wear gloves. It is a good plan to grease the hands well before drawing on the rubber gloves. Wear large gloves while working, so that the hands will not be cramped. Some wear mittens made of gray cotton flannel.

Hands, to keep their whiteness and smoothness, need plenty of grease. One should have a wide-mouth jar or bottle of grease upon the wash-stand, and, before drying the hands after washing them, rub some of it well into the skin. White vasoline and almond oil, mixed together in equal parts, make a very good lubricant.

Treating the Hands Moist

If the hands are very dry, wear loose gloves at night after rubbing some grease well into them. The difficulty in keeping the hands in good condition is the necessity for washing them so frequently. The water takes the oil out of the skin. The soap used for the hands should not contain too much alkali.

If the hands are not thoroughly dried after washing them or having them in water they will become red and rough. Some use glycerine for the hands. It should always be borne in mind when using glycerine for any toilet purpose that it does not agree with all skins. It takes the moisture out of the skin, and therefore should be mixed with water when used.

Caring for the Nails

The care of the nails is of great importance to the looks of the hands. They should be almost-shaped. I have been asked how one can have the "white moons" that appear at the base of the nails. That the nail should look well, the skin about it should be kept loose. This is done by means of an orange-wood stick or the blunt end of a nail file.

If this skin is raised and pushed back the little crescents at the base of the nail will appear. In some cases the

"moons" are buried so deep that the skin cannot be pushed back far enough to bring more than the tip of it in sight, and sometimes not even that will show.

One should learn to do manicuring for one's self. It is very easy, after a little practice. At first soak the nails in soap and water to which a few drops of ammonia have been added. Then raise the cuticle about the nail and push it as far back as it will go. Trim the nails with the scissors (the small curved nail scissors are the best), and then use the roughest-side of the emery board, which come for the nails, until they are shaped properly.

Manicuring at Home

Do not point the nails. In very bad cases, fingers with nails remain one of the blunt nail-removers or sticks to clean the nails. It destroys the natural surface, and the nails will grow back, and the skin, but do not cut the little selvage around the nail. You will have hang-nails if you make it raw and bleed it. Rub plenty of white vasoline, or the carmine polish, especially for this purpose, that it is not in good condition. The finger-nails too, take the nail-brush and rub the nail-brush over you can polish them.

Edith